Nikita Krushchev is the late John Foster Dulles' most apt pupil.

This is the real, untold story of the Cuban crisis of 1962.

Unlike the originator of Brinkmanship, Krushchev's venture into this trickiest and most hazardous diplomacy had immediate and tangible results. It accomplished specific purposes he had in mind, including ending an imminent threat of nuclear war. The world, and relations between the major powers, are better off for it. Peace, which hung on a hair, hangs a little firmer.

Nobody seems to understand what really happened. But we had better analyze and comprehend what the Soviet leader did, why and how he did it, what the results were, and what it might in the future mean. Unless we do, we may progress from "eyeball to eyeball" to total destruction.

Every event in those harrowing days was planned or anticipated by that amazingly shrewd man in the Kremlin. Developments were exactly or approximately as he planned them. Actually, we in the United States, while we thought we were forcing him, were merely reacting to his moves. We could have followed him no closer if he'd had a ring in our nose.

What made a Brinkman of Krushchev? Nuclear war was the alternative he faced. His crisis came, not in the fall of 1962 but in early summer, with the widely reported visit of Raul Castro and Che Guevara. They built the fire under Krushchev's withh's brew.

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A possible attack on Cuba was so well publicized it was photographed on U.S. TV.

The Bay of Pigs fiasco gave him little reason to trust the judgment of the CIA.

He was deeply and publicly committed to defend Cuba "with every means" at his disposal. Inevitably, nuclear war.

The only way he could control events was to take the initiative.

Meanwhile, the whole world knew he was surrounded by American missiles, some even on his border, not separated by the ocean.

Why not turn the tables and bring the whole crisis to a head - and make the American government reconsider its Cuban policy and its potentialities - by putting his missiles in Cuba?

In Cuba, they served only a diplomatic purpose. They were of no essential value for defense or offense. At best, they could contribute a questionable overkill capacity for the briefest moment, and then only if the Soviets attacked.

There is no evidence there ever was a warhead in Cuba, not even an irresponsible claim of any.

There is no evidence of even a rudimentary attempt to camouflage the installations or deliveries.

There was no effort to impede aerial reconnaissance, and reason to believe the "secret" was leaked to the well infiltrated Cuban exile groups. When it served K's purpose to shoot down a reconnaissance plane, he did so and showed he could do so.

At no point did any Cubans control any weapons or any initiative that could affect K's plan, and when Castro finally realized what had happened, he complained long and loud. He now understands why it had to happen that way and is satisfied.

President Kennedy's alternatives were limited. He could attack and unleash nuclear disaster or demand the withdrawal of the rockets. This meant really no alternatives, and his diplomatic position was weakened by the presence

of similar, and known to be nuclear-armed, American rockets all around the Soviets.

He was in no position to deny Krushchev's quid pro quo, a guarantee that the U.S. would not attack Cuba. Had he tried to, he would have been completely isolated.

Meanwhile, Krushchev had seen to it that Kennedy had a ready-made face-saver in the withdrawal of the Russian rockets which the Soviets never wanted and never needed in Cuba, anyway.

The results were the elimination of the greatest immediate danger to peace in the world, a guarantee against a Cuban invasion not otherwise attainable, and the beginning of a normalization of trade relations between Cuba and the rest of the world, despite opposition and economic threats from the U.S.